

(12) **United States Patent**
McCann et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,313,759 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Apr. 12, 2016**

(54) **METHODS, SYSTEMS, AND COMPUTER READABLE MEDIA FOR PROVIDING TRIGGERLESS EQUIPMENT IDENTITY REGISTER (EIR) SERVICE IN A DIAMETER NETWORK**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC . H04L 63/0263; H04L 63/0892; H04W 8/04; H04W 60/00; H04W 12/06
USPC 726/2-3, 11-13
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 168 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **13/751,027**
(22) Filed: **Jan. 25, 2013**
(65) **Prior Publication Data**
US 2013/0171990 A1 Jul. 4, 2013

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 12/906,998, filed on Oct. 18, 2010, now Pat. No. 8,613,073.
(60) Provisional application No. 61/252,557, filed on Oct. 16, 2009.

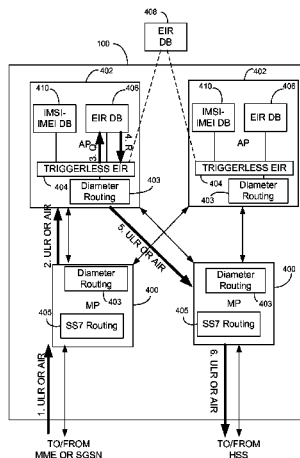
(51) **Int. Cl.**
H04L 29/06 (2006.01)
H04W 60/00 (2009.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **H04W 60/00** (2013.01); **H04L 63/0263** (2013.01); **H04L 63/0892** (2013.01); **H04W 8/04** (2013.01); **H04W 12/06** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The subject matter described herein includes methods, systems, and computer readable media for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network. One method includes steps performed at a Diameter routing agent (DRA). The steps include, receiving a registration or authentication information request at the DRA. The steps further include performing, by the DRA, an EIR lookup in response to the registration or authentication information request message. The method further includes, relaying the registration or authentication information request message to a home subscriber server (HSS) or a home location register (HLR) or responding on behalf of the HSS or HLR based on results of the EIR lookup.

24 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



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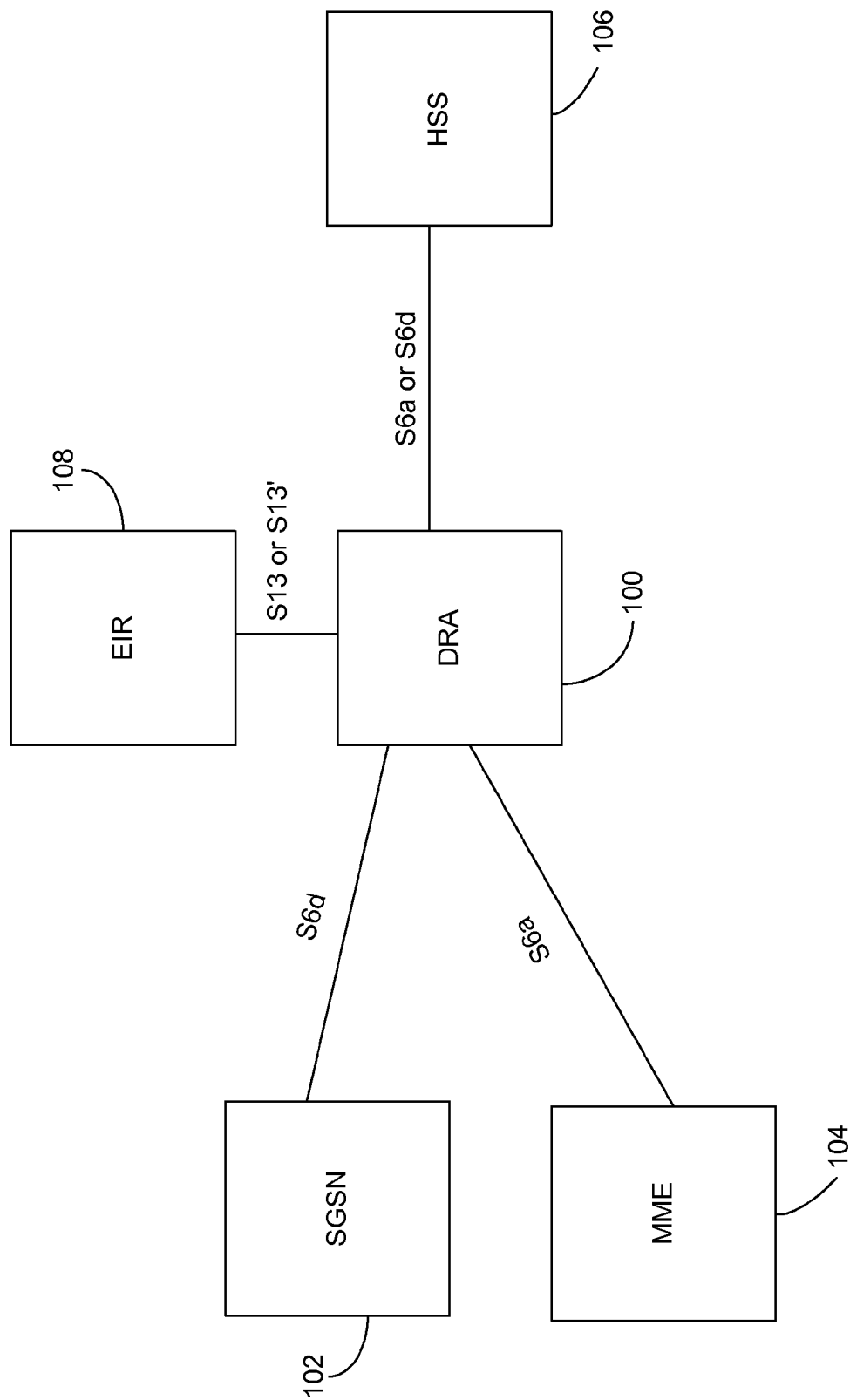


FIG. 1

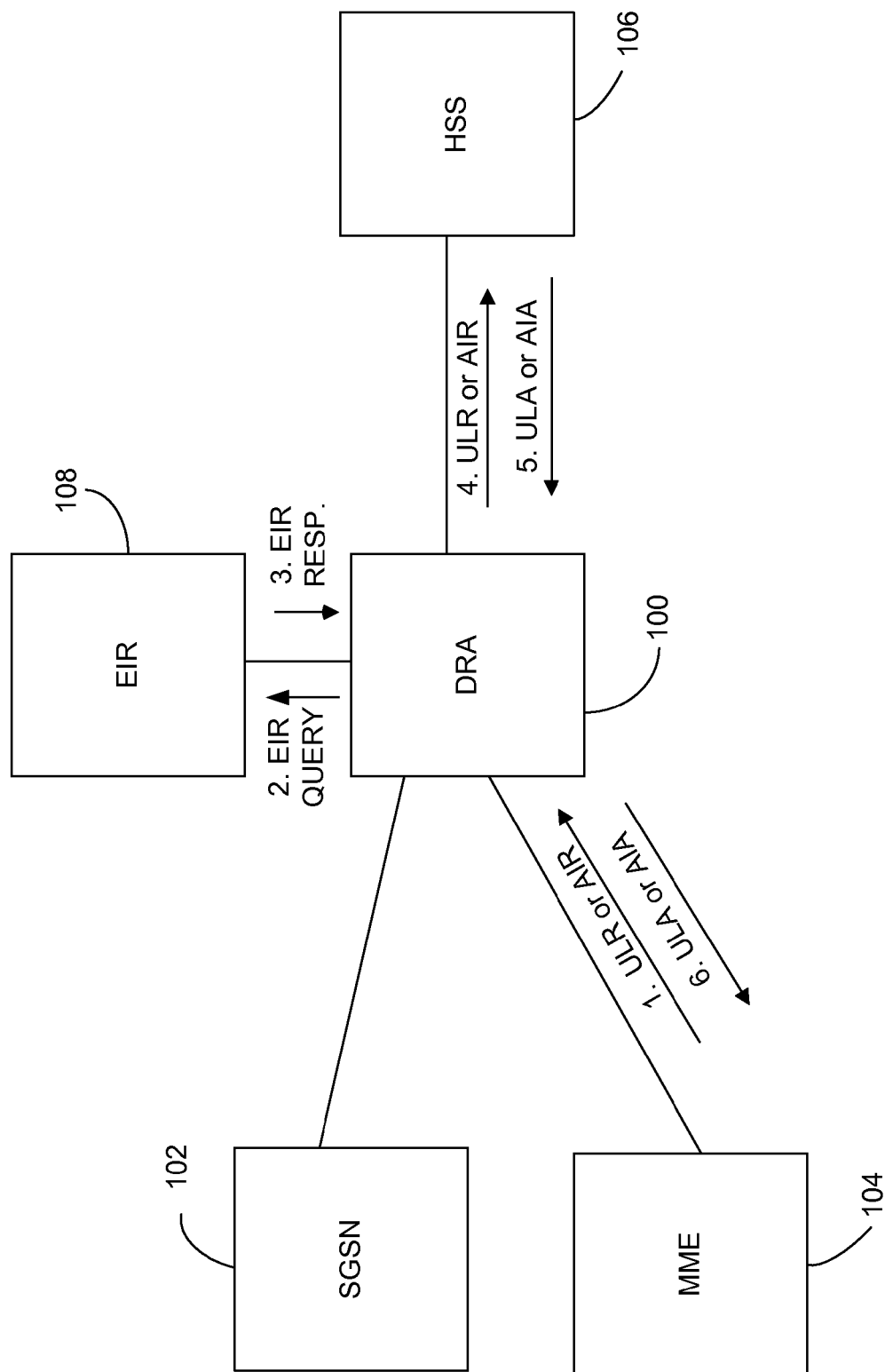


FIG. 2

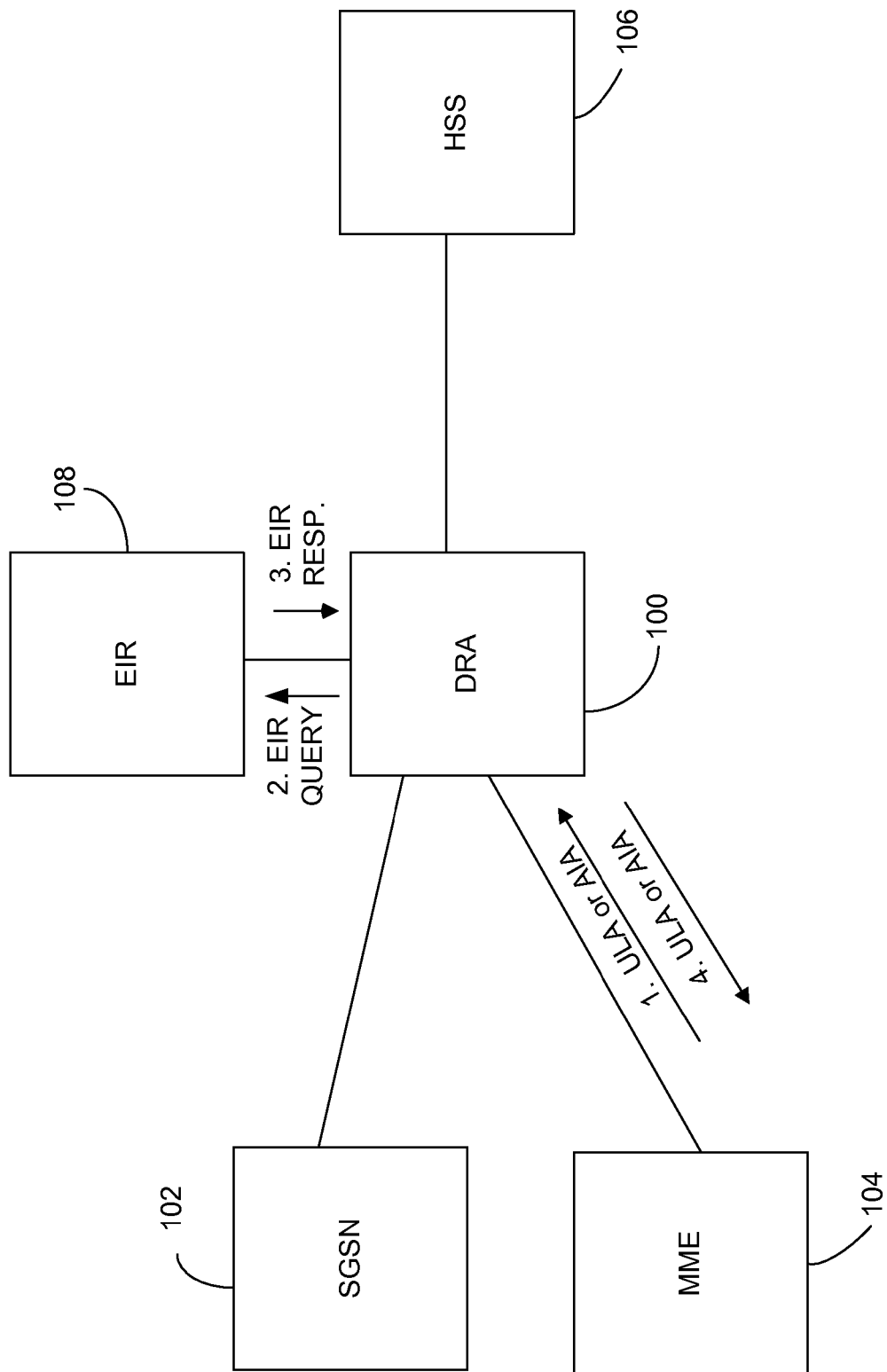


FIG. 3

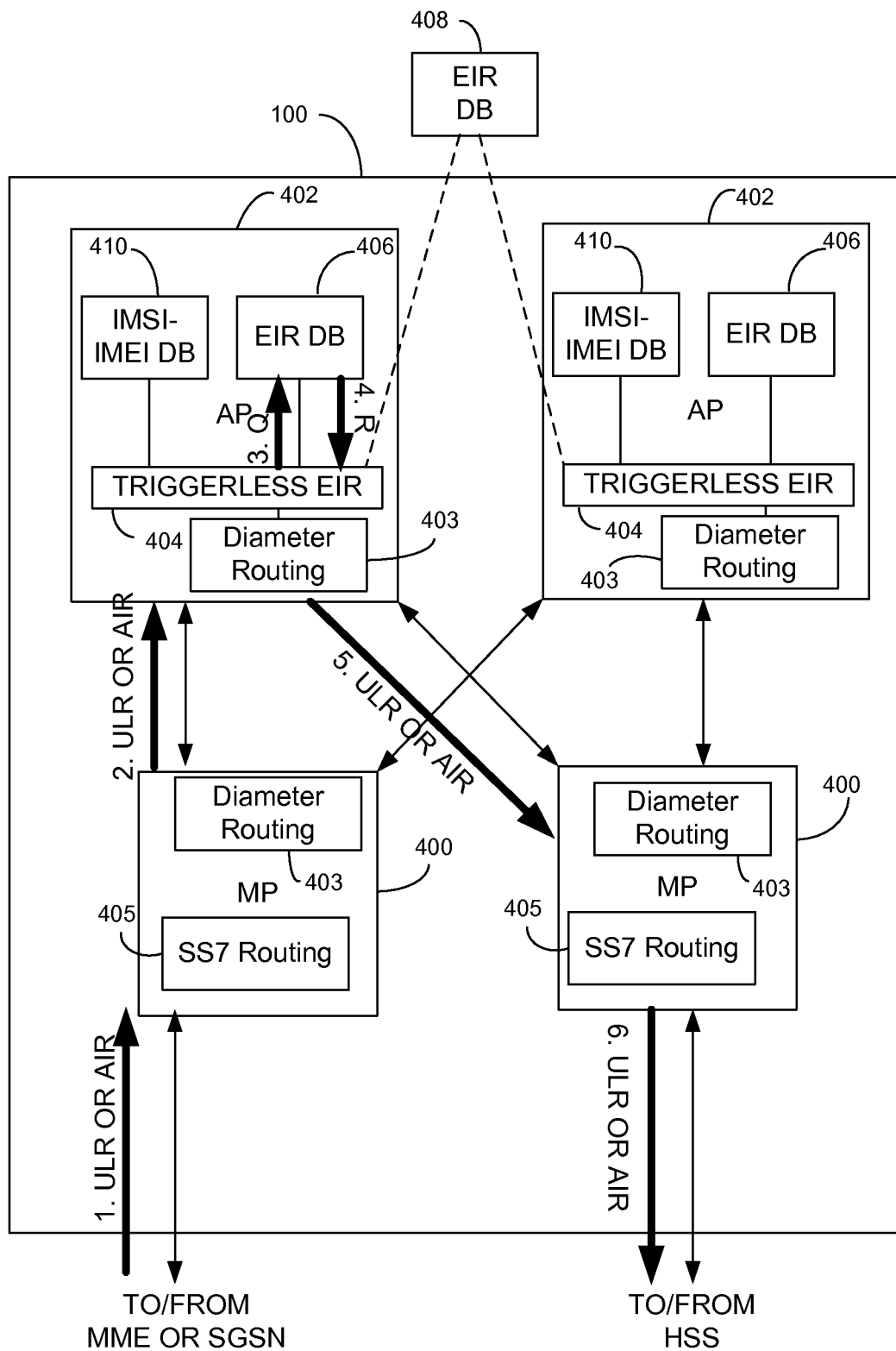


FIG. 4

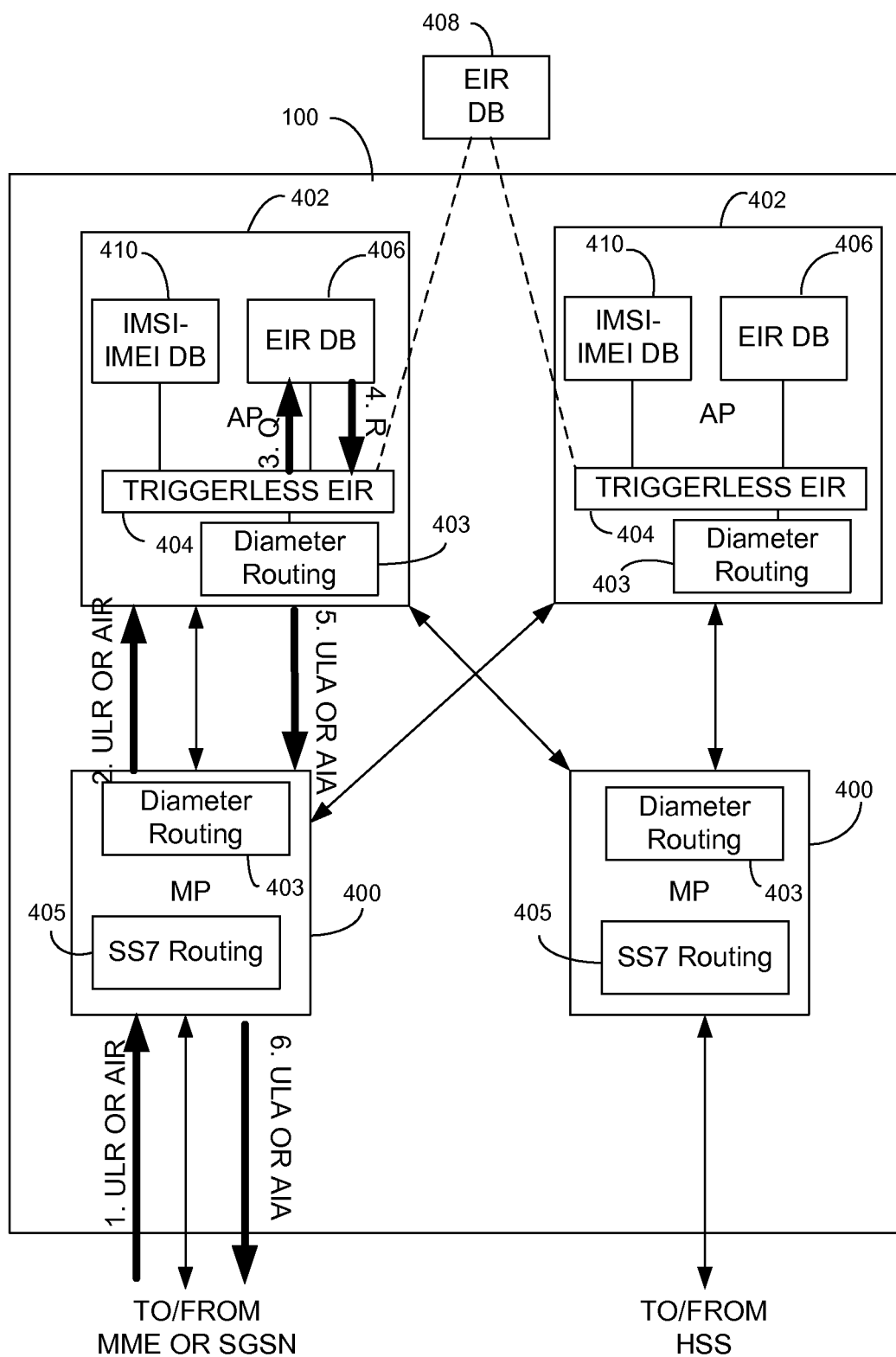


FIG. 5

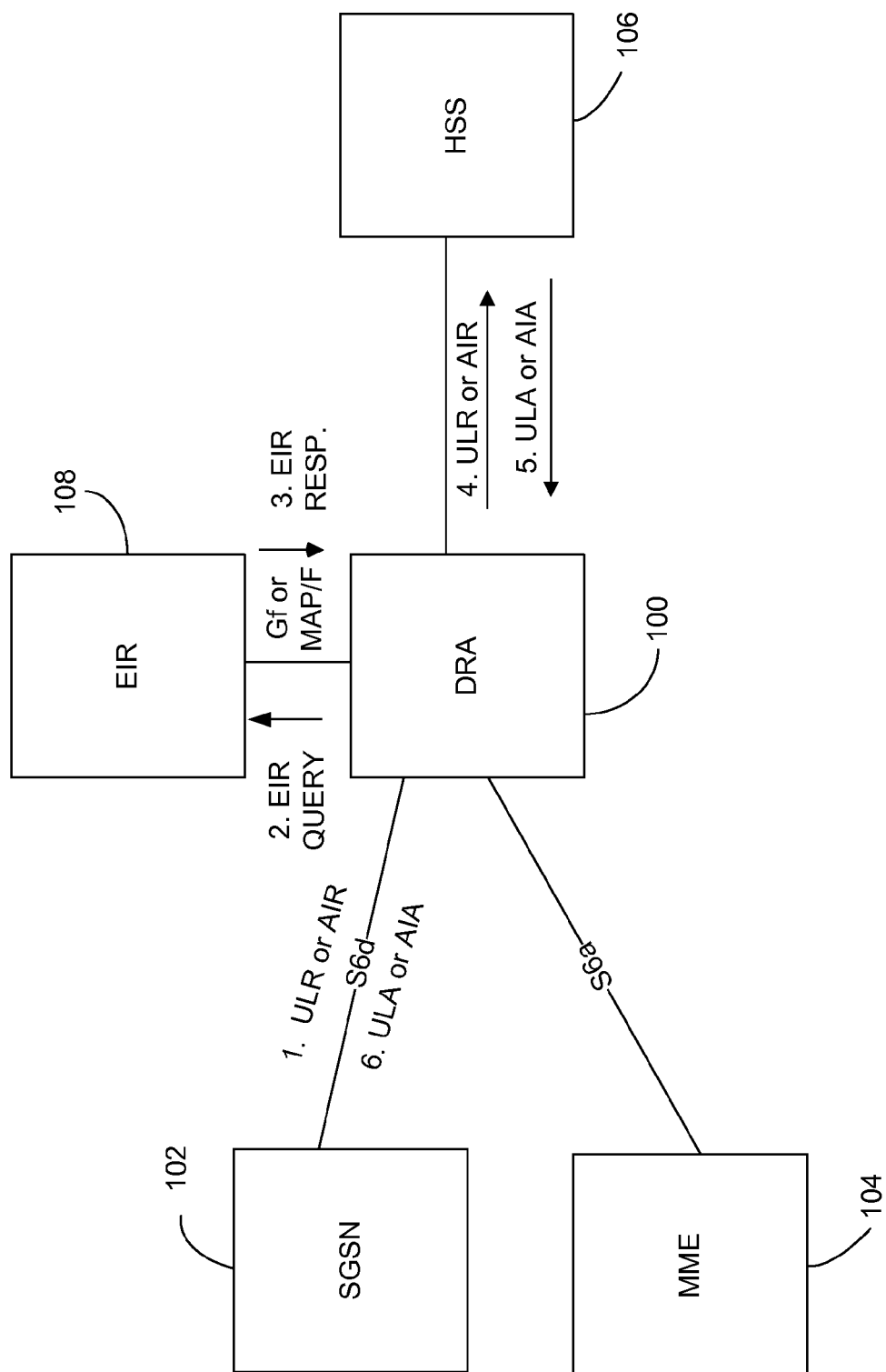


FIG. 6

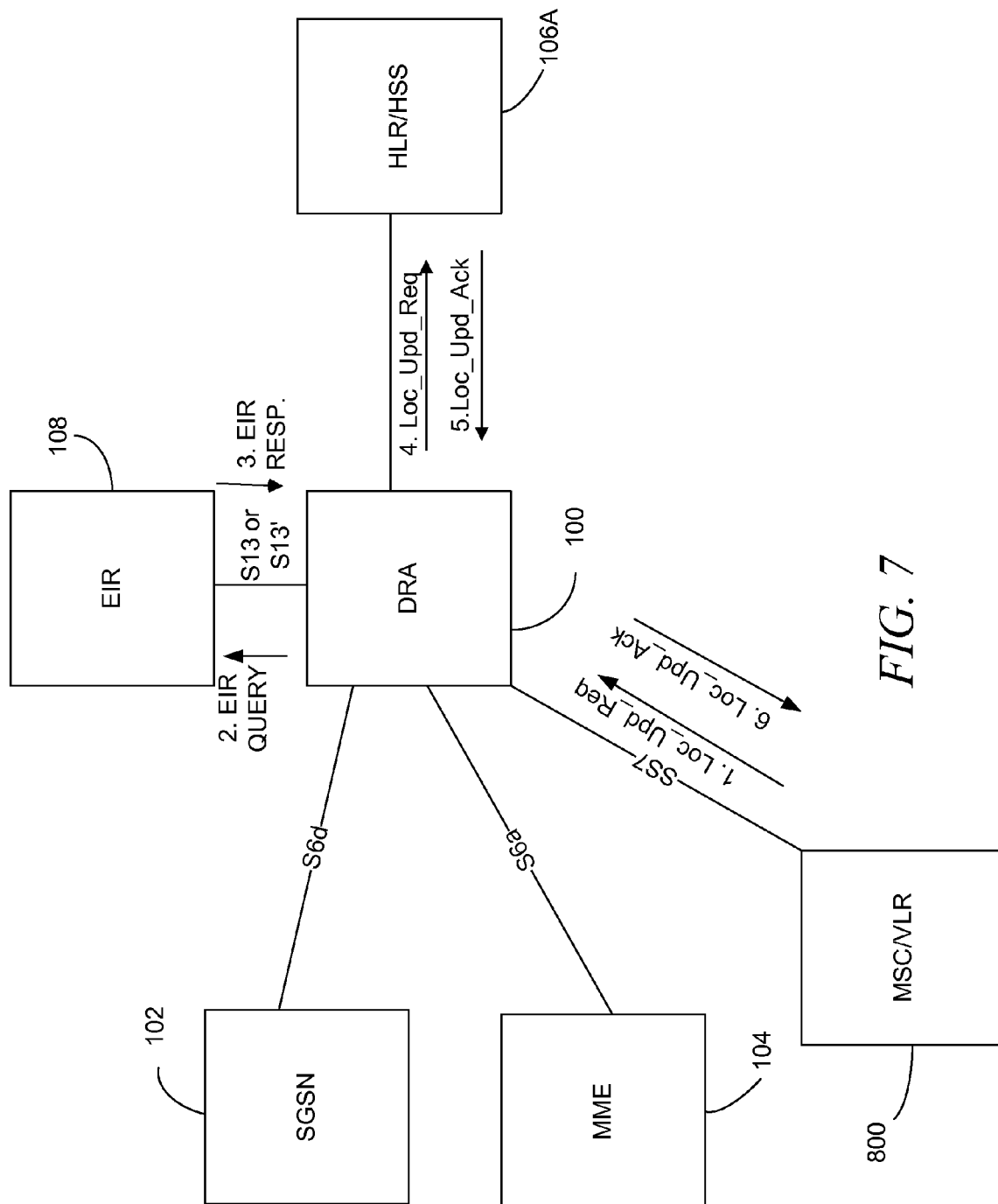
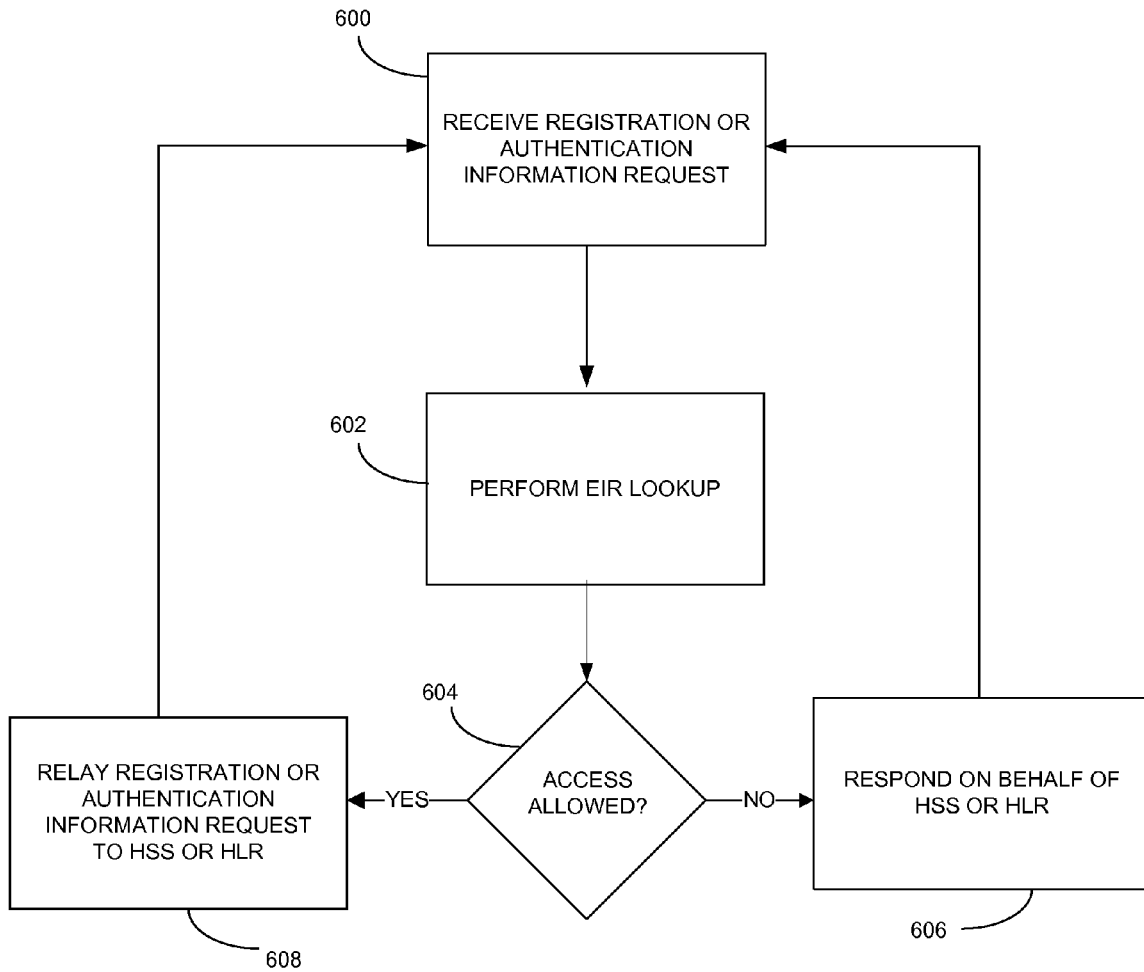


FIG. 7

*FIG. 8*

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METHODS, SYSTEMS, AND COMPUTER READABLE MEDIA FOR PROVIDING TRIGGERLESS EQUIPMENT IDENTITY REGISTER (EIR) SERVICE IN A DIAMETER NETWORK

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/906,998, filed Oct. 18, 2010, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/252,557, filed Oct. 16, 2009.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The subject matter described herein relates to providing EIR service in a Diameter network. More particularly, the subject matter described herein includes methods, systems, and computer readable media for providing triggerless equipment identity register (EIR) service in a Diameter network.

BACKGROUND

In telecommunications networks, the EIR is a database that stores access control information for mobile devices. In particular, the EIR is a database of mobile device identifiers, typically international mobile equipment identifiers (IMEIs), and access control rules for the IMEIs. When a device attempts to access the network, the mobility management entity (MME), serving GPRS support node (SGSN), or mobile switching center/visitor location registrar (MSC/VLR) queries the EIR to determine whether the IMEI associated with the mobile device is permitted to access the network. The EIR responds indicating whether or not the mobile device is permitted to access the network.

The Third Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) defines the S13 and S13' interfaces for accessing an EIR in long term evolution (LTE) networks. In SS7 networks, the SGSN accesses the EIR via a Gf interface, and the MSC/VLR accesses the EIR via a mobile application part (MAP)/F interface. The S13, S13', Gf, and MAP/F interfaces are triggered interfaces that require a query from the MME, SGSN, or MSC/VLR to the EIR and a response from the EIR to the querying node. A triggered interface means that the MME, SGSN, or MSC/VLR is required to be configured with software, referred to as a trigger, that upon activation of a mobile device on a network, queries the EIR, waits for the response, and determines whether the mobile device is permitted to access the network based on the response from the EIR database. Requiring the MME, SGSN, or MSC/VLR to have a triggered interface for EIR database access increases the complexity of MME, SGSN, or MSC/VLR design and can also delay call processing.

Accordingly, there exists a need for methods, systems, and computer readable media for providing triggerless equipment identity register (EIR) service in a Diameter network.

SUMMARY

The subject matter described herein includes methods, systems, and computer readable media for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network. One method includes steps performed at a Diameter routing agent (DRA). The steps include receiving a registration or authentication information request message at the DRA. The steps further include performing, by the DRA, an EIR lookup in response to the registration or authentication information request message.

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The method further includes, relaying the registration or authentication information request message to a home subscriber server (HSS) or a home location register (HLR) or responding on behalf of the HSS or HLR based on results of the EIR lookup.

Because a DRA according to embodiments of the subject matter described herein may be configured to perform triggerless EIR service in response to a received Diameter update location request (ULR), Diameter authentication information request (AIR), SS7 location update message, or other non-EIR message, the term "registration or authentication information request message" will be used herein to refer to any one or more of these and/or other non-EIR message types.

The subject matter described herein can be implemented in software in combination with hardware and/or firmware. For example, the subject matter described herein can be implemented in software executed by a processor. In one exemplary implementation, the subject matter described herein can be implemented using a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon computer executable instructions that when executed by the processor of a computer control the computer to perform steps. Exemplary computer readable media suitable for implementing the subject matter described herein include non-transitory computer-readable media, such as disk memory devices, chip memory devices, programmable logic devices, and application specific integrated circuits. In addition, a computer readable medium that implements the subject matter described herein may be located on a single device or computing platform or may be distributed across multiple devices or computing platforms.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the subject matter described herein will now be explained with reference to the accompanying drawings of which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary system for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 2 is a network diagram illustrating triggerless EIR service where network access is allowed according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 3 is a network diagram illustrating triggerless EIR service where network access is blocked according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary DRA for providing triggerless EIR service where network access is allowed according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary DRA for providing triggerless EIR service where network access is blocked according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 6 is a network diagram illustrating an exemplary network architecture for using a DRA with an SS7 connected EIR to provide triggerless EIR service according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein;

FIG. 7 is a network diagram illustrating an exemplary network architecture for using a DRA with a Diameter connected EIR to provide triggerless EIR service to SS7 and Diameter connected nodes according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein; and

FIG. 8 is a flow chart illustrating exemplary steps for providing triggerless EIR service according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein.

The subject matter described herein includes methods, systems, and computer readable media for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network. By “triggerless” it is meant that an SGSN or MME, or other node is not required to be configured with a trigger to perform an EIR lookup over the S13, S13', or other EIR interface. Instead, a Diameter routing agent receives a Diameter ULR, AIR, or other non-EIR message from the SGSN, MME, or other node and performs the EIR lookup based on the received non-EIR message, eliminating the need for an MME, SGSN, MSC/VLR, or other switching office trigger.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary system for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein. Referring to FIG. 1, a Diameter routing agent (DRA) 100 resides on the S6a or S6d interface between SGSN 102 or MME 104 and home subscriber server (HSS) 106. DRA 100 may be a network node that routes Diameter signaling messages based on Diameter routing information. DRA 100 may also be referred to as a Diameter signaling router (DSR). DRA 100 is configured to perform lookups in an EIR database 108 in response to Diameter messages received from SGSN 102 or MME 104. EIR database 108 may be internal to DRA 100 or external to DRA 100. If EIR 108 is external, DRA 100 may be coupled to EIR 108 via an S13 or S13' interface, an SS7 interface, or a proprietary interface. EIR database 108, whether internal or external to DRA 100, may store access control information for mobile devices, such as long term evolution (LTE) devices.

In one exemplary implementation as illustrated in FIG. 2, DRA 100 receives a ULR or AIR message from SGSN 102 or MME 104. The ULR or AIR message may be addressed to HSS 106, and DRA 100 may intercept the ULR or AIR message. In response to the ULR or AIR message, DRA 100 performs a lookup in EIR 108 and receives a response from EIR 108. The lookup in the EIR database may be performed based on the IMEI and optional IMSI. The IMEI may be inserted in the ULR or AIR message by the SGSN 102 or MME 104. The IMEI is not typically included in the ULR or AIR message. Accordingly SGSN 102 or MME 104 may be provisioned to insert the IMEI in an extension or experimental field of the ULR or AIR. Alternatively, for some types of phones, such as fifth generation iPhones®, where there is no SIM card or the SIM card is not removable, the mapping between the IMEI and the IMSI is fixed. If the mapping between the IMEI and the IMSI is fixed, the ULR or AIR message may omit the IMEI and may only contain the IMSI. DRA 100 may store or have access to a database that maps IMSIs to IMEIs for such devices. DRA 100 may map the IMSI to the IMEI and perform the EIR lookup based on the IMEI and optional IMSI.

EIR 108 implements device access authorization functions, such as determining whether a particular device or user equipment is stolen and whether it is allowed to access the network. If the result of the lookup in EIR 108 is that the access to the network by the device is allowed, DRA 100 may relay the ULR or AIR message to HSS 106. This case is illustrated in FIG. 2. In the message flow illustrated in FIG. 2, in step 1, MME 104 sends a ULA or AIA message to DRA 100. In step 2, DRA 100 performs a lookup in EIR database 108. In step 3, EIR database 108 responds indicating that access to the network is allowed. In step 4, DRA 100 relays the ULR or AIR message to HSS 106. In step 5, HSS 106 forwards a ULA or AIA message to MME 104 via DRA 100.

FIG. 3 is a network diagram similar to FIG. 2 where DRA 100 responds on behalf of HSS 106 when the result of the EIR lookup is that network access is blocked. Referring to FIG. 3, in step 1, MME 104 sends a ULA or AIA message to HSS 106 via DRA 100. In step 2, DRA 100 queries EIR 108 to determine whether access to the network is allowed. In step 3, EIR 108 responds indicating that access to the network is not allowed. In step 4, DRA 100 responds on behalf of HSS 106 by sending a ULA or AIA message to MME 104 indicating that network access is not allowed. By “responding on behalf of HSS 106”, it is meant that DRA 100 formulates the ULA or AIA message and transmits the ULA or AIA message to MME 104 or SGSN 102 without forwarding the ULR or AIR message to HSS 106. The ULA or AIA message may include an existing experimental result code or a new experimental result code that indicates that access to the network by the device identified by the IMEI is blocked. If the received message is a ULR message, the response may be a ULA message with a flag value that indicates that the access is blocked.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary internal architecture for DRA 100 that provides triggerless EIR services according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein. In FIG. 4, DRA 100 includes a plurality of message processors 400 that perform Diameter routing functions. For example, each message processor 400 may route Diameter signaling messages based on Diameter routing information. DRA 100 may also include one or more application processors 402 that perform application functions. Each of message processors 400 and application processors 402 may include Diameter routing modules 403 for routing received Diameter signaling messages. Message processors 400 may also include SS7 routing modules 405 for routing SS7 messages based on SS7 information.

In one embodiment, application processors 402 may be configured to query an internal or external EIR database. As such, application processor 402 includes a triggerless EIR module 404 for performing an internal or external EIR lookup in internal EIR database 406 or external EIR database 408. In addition, each triggerless EIR module 404 may also have access to an IMSI to IMEI database 410 that stores mappings between IMSIs and IMEIs for phones without SIM cards where the mappings between IMSIs and IMEIs are fixed. If the EIR database is external and connected via a Diameter S13 or S13' interface, each triggerless EIR module 404 may access the external EIR database using a Diameter-based EIR query sent over the S13 or S13' interface. If the EIR database is external and connected via an SS7 network interface, such as an SS7 Gf, MAP/F or other interface, each triggerless EIR module 404 may formulate an SS7-based EIR query.

In step 1 in FIG. 4, a message processor 400 receives a ULR or AIR message and identifies the message as one that requires an EIR lookup. Accordingly, in step 2, message processor 400 forwards the message to application processor 402. In steps 3 and 4, triggerless EIR module 404 accesses internal or external EIR database 406 or 408 and determines whether or not the subscriber is allowed to access the network. If the equipment is allowed to access the network, in step 5, triggerless EIR module 404 relays the ULR or AIR message to a message processor 400 associated with the HSS so that the message will be forwarded to the HSS. In step 6, message processor 400 forwards the ULR or AIR to the HSS. If the equipment is not permitted to access the network, triggerless EIR function responds on behalf of the HSS with a ULA or AIA message indicating that the access is not allowed.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating the message flow through DRA 100 for the case where DRA 100 responds on behalf of HSS 106 according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein. Referring to FIG. 5, in step 1, a ULR AIR message is received at message processor 104. In step 2, message processor 400 forwards the ULR or AIR message to application processor 402. In steps 3 and 4, application processor 402 queries EIR database 406 to determine whether access is allowed. In this instance, it is determined that access is not allowed. Accordingly, in step 5, triggerless EIR module 404 formulates a ULA or AIA message indicating that access is not allowed and forwards the message the egress message processor 400. In step 6, egress message processor 400 forwards the ULA or AIA message to the MME or the SGSN.

In some of the examples described above, the EIR is queried on the S13 or S13' interface in response to received ULR or AIR messages. However, the subject matter described herein is not limited to querying the EIR over the S13 or S13' interface. In an alternate embodiment, the EIR may be connected to the DRA via an SS7 Gf, MAP/F or other interface. Such an embodiment allows a service provider to use an EIR with an SS7 interface without requiring that the service provider add a Diameter interface to the EIR. FIG. 6 illustrates such an embodiment. In FIG. 6, step 1, DRA 100 receives a ULR or AIR message from SGSN 102. In response to the ULR or AIR message, in step 2, DRA 100 formulates an EIR query via the SS7 Gf or MAP/F interface. Such a query may be an SS7 formatted query sent over a Sigtran or TDM-based SS7 signaling link. The EIR query may include the IMEI and optionally, the IMSI. In step 3, DRA 100 receives a response from EIR 108. In this example, the response indicates that the device is allowed to access the network. Accordingly in step 4, DRA 100 forwards the ULR or AIR query to HSS 106. In step 5, HSS 106 response to the query with a ULA or AIA message. In step 6, DRA 100 routes the ULA or AIA message to SGSN 102.

In yet another alternate embodiment, triggerless EIR service for messages received via an SS7 interface may result in an EIR lookup via a Diameter connected EIR. FIG. 7 illustrates this embodiment. In FIG. 7, DRA 100 includes SS7 STP functionality and SS7-Diameter gateway functionality. STP functionality means that DRA 100 may route received SS7 signaling messages based on SS7 routing information. SS7-Diameter gateway functionality means that DRA may be capable of formulating Diameter messages based on received SS7 messages and vice versa. Referring to the message flow in FIG. 7, in step 1, DRA 100 intercepts an SS7 location update request message from MSC/VLR 700. In step 2, DRA 100 sends a Diameter query to EIR 108 via a Diameter S13 or S13' interface. In step 3, DRA 100 receives a response from EIR 108 indicating that the mobile device is permitted to access the network. Accordingly, in step 4, DRA 100 routes the location update request message to HLR/HSS 106A. In step 5, HLR/HSS 106A responds with a location update acknowledge message. In step 6, DRA 106A routes the location update acknowledge message to MSC/VLR 700.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart illustrating exemplary overall steps for providing triggerless EIR service in a Diameter network according to an embodiment of the subject matter described herein. Referring to FIG. 8, in step 800, DRA 100 receives a registration or authentication information request message. For example, DRA 100 may receive a ULR or AIA message from MME 104 or SGSN 102. Alternatively, DRA 100 may receive a location update or other type of non-EIR SS7 message from MSC/VLR 700 or from SGSN 102. In steps 802 and 804, DRA 100 performs an EIR lookup based on the registration or authentication information request message

and determines whether access to the network is allowed. For example, DRA 100 may perform a lookup in internal EIR database 406 or external EIR database 408 to determine whether the IMEI corresponds to allowed or denied equipment. If access is allowed, control proceeds to step 806 where the registration or authentication request message is relayed to HSS 106 or to an HLR. If access is not allowed, control proceeds to step 808 where DRA 100 responds on behalf of HSS or HLR indicating that access is not allowed.

It will be understood that various details of the presently disclosed subject matter may be changed without departing from the scope of the presently disclosed subject matter. Furthermore, the foregoing description is for the purpose of illustration only, and not for the purpose of limitation.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing triggerless equipment identity register (EIR) service in a Diameter network that eliminates the need for a switching office trigger, the method comprising:

at a Diameter routing agent (DRA) comprising a hardware processor and memory for:

intercepting, at the DRA, a non-EIR message that is addressed to a home subscriber server (HSS), the non-EIR message comprising a Diameter Update Location Request (ULR) message or a Diameter Authentication Information Request (AIR) message;

performing, by the DRA, an EIR lookup in an EIR database in response to intercepting the non-EIR message;

receiving, at the DRA, an indication that access to the network is either allowed or denied;

in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is allowed, relaying the non-EIR message to the HSS that the non-EIR message is addressed to; and

in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is denied, formulating an Update Location Answer (ULA) message or an Authentication Information Answer (AIA) message and responding on behalf of the HSS without forwarding the non-EIR message to the HSS.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-EIR message includes an international mobile equipment identifier (IMEI) and wherein the DRA performs the EIR lookup using the IMEI.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the DRA performs the EIR lookup using the IMEI and an international mobile station identifier (IMSI).

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the EIR message does not include an international mobile equipment identifier (IMEI) and wherein the DRA maps an international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) in the registration or authentication information request message to an IMEI.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the EIR database is internal to the DRA.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the EIR database is external to the DRA.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the DRA sends a query to the EIR database via an S13 or S13' interface.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the DRA sends a query to the EIR database via an SS7 Gf, MAP/F or other interface.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-EIR message is generated at a mobility management entity (MME) or a serving GPRS support node (SGSN).

10. The method of claim 1 wherein, responding on behalf of the HSS comprises transmitting the ULA message or the AIA message to a mobility management entity (MME) or an serving GPRS support node (SGSN).

11. The method of claim 1 wherein responding on behalf of the HSS includes sending a response to the non-EIR message indicating that access to the network is denied.

12. A system for providing triggerless equipment identity register (EIR) service in a Diameter network that eliminates the need for a switching office trigger, the system comprising:

- a Diameter routing agent (DRA) including:
- a hardware message processor for intercepting a non-EIR message that is addressed to a home subscriber server (HSS), the non-EIR message comprising a Diameter Update Location Request (ULR) message or a Diameter Authentication Information Request (AIR) message; and

a triggerless EIR module for performing an EIR lookup in an EIR database in response to intercepting the non-EIR message, wherein the triggerless EIR module receives an indication that access to the network is either allowed or denied and, in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is allowed, the EIR module relays the non-EIR message to the HSS that the non-EIR message is addressed to, and in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is denied, the EIR module formulates an Update Location Answer (ULA) message or an Authentication Information Answer (AIA) message and responds to the non-EIR message on behalf of the HSS without forwarding the non-EIR message to the HSS.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein the non-EIR message includes an international mobile equipment identifier (IMEI) and wherein the triggerless EIR module performs the EIR lookup using the IMEI.

14. The system of claim 13 wherein the DRA performs the EIR lookup using the IMEI and an international mobile station identifier (IMSI).

15. The system of claim 12 wherein the non-EIR message does not include an international mobile equipment identifier (IMEI) and wherein the triggerless EIR module maps an international mobile subscriber identity (IMSI) in the registration or authentication information request message to an IMEI.

16. The system of claim 12 wherein the DRA includes an internal EIR database and wherein the EIR lookup is performed in the internal EIR database.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the internal EIR database is configured to store device access information for long term evolution (LTE) devices.

18. The system of claim 12 wherein the EIR database is external to the DRA.

19. The system of claim 12 wherein the DRA sends a query to the EIR database via an S13 or S13' interface.

20. The system of claim 12 wherein the DRA sends a query to the EIR database via an SS7 Gf, MAP/F or other interface.

21. The system of claim 12 wherein the non-EIR message is generated at a mobility management entity (MME) or a serving GPRS support node (SGSN).

22. The system of claim 12 wherein responding on behalf of the HSS comprises transmitting the ULA message or the AIA message to a mobility management entity (MME) or an serving GPRS support node (SGSN).

23. The system of claim 12 wherein responding on behalf of the HSS includes sending a response to the non-EIR message indicating that access to the network is denied.

24. A non-transitory computer readable medium having executable instructions that when executed by the processor of a computer control the computer to perform steps comprising:

at a Diameter routing agent (DRA):

intercepting, at the DRA, a non-EIR message that is addressed to a home subscriber server (HSS), the non-EIR message comprising a Diameter update location request (ULR) message or a Diameter authentication information request (AIR) message;

performing, by the DRA, an EIR lookup in an EIR database in response to intercepting the non-EIR message;

receiving, at the DRA, an indication that access to the network is either allowed or denied;

in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is allowed, relaying the non-EIR message to the HSS that the non-EIR message is addressed to; and

in response to receiving an indication that access to the network is denied, formulating an Update Location Answer (ULA) message or an Authentication Information Answer (AIA) message and responding on behalf of the HSS without forwarding the non-EIR message to the HSS.

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